Preventing family violence in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities

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Aboriginal people who had experienced &/or perpetrated family violence, Aboriginal elders, leaders and community members, health providers, justice sector, Aboriginal community controlled organisations, family violence-specific services, housing and homelessness services, state government agencies and related officials.

Research team: Professor Marcia Langton, Dr Kristen Smith & Tahlia Eastman

3 research projects

148 participants
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 32x more likely to be hospitalised for family violence than non-Indigenous Australians.

2 in 3 physical assaults on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are perpetrated by a family member.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people are five times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than non-Indigenous Australians

AIHW 2019; ABS 2019
Risk factors and impacts of family violence for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people

BURDEN OF DISEASE
Intimate partner violence is the leading cause of lost years of life for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women aged 25-35 years.

HOMELESSNESS
More than 1/5 of all clients seeking homelessness services are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

INCARCERATION
In Victoria, nearly 90% Aboriginal women in prison have experienced sexual, physical or emotional abuse.

CHILD PROTECTION & REMOVAL
Between 1999-2018 the rate of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care increased from 18.3 to 59.4 per 1,000.
This is going on in KMS a little bit – Koori Maternity. There was one lady I had who she couldn't make it to her appointments, her prenatal appointments. The non-Aboriginal workers assumed she was drinking and had that phone ready to make a DHHS report.
(Kate, ACCO provider, October 2018)

I called the police thinking that they'd help me, but in a sense, saying that, I felt like I had failed my kids in that area for the simple fact that I called the police, because I thought they were there to help people, but...they reported me to the Department of Human Services. So, I mean going through a situation like that was my biggest fear of Community Services coming at my back because I was a ward of the state myself and I didn’t want that for my kids.
(Evie, focus group, August 2019)
Aboriginal-led healing processes

Self-determination & human rights

Creating safe spaces & responses

Application of Indigenous knowledges
Improving the availability, acceptability and accessibility of all family violence related services

- Greater & more secure resources for Aboriginal service sector
- Better security of privacy & confidentiality measures in the Aboriginal service sector
- Creating culturally safe spaces in mainstream organisations by improving knowledge of workers
- Use of visible signposts to indicate Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people are welcome
KOORI COURT & UMALEK BALIT

Trial of family violence order breaches & Koori Family Violence Practitioners